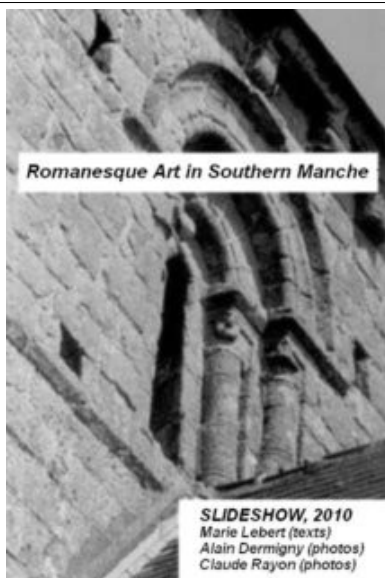




000. Romanesque Art in the Mont Saint-Michel Bay.

Version dated March 2016. Texts, maps, church plans and sketches (gates and piers) by Marie Lebert. Photos by Alain Dermigny and Claude Rayon. Copyright @ 2010-2016 Marie Lebert. License Creative Commons CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

In this album, there are no monuments described in all tourist guides. On the contrary, these twelve Romanesque churches are little known. They were built by villagers and parishioners in the 10th, 11th or 12th century, with local stones (schist and granite), on the roads used by pilgrims to reach Mont Saint-Michel, their final destination after travelling for many months.



001. An album as a result of a long-term project.

The 214 images (with a small and medium format for each) can be downloaded in a zip file at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/33249/> (choose the file 33249-h.zip) thanks to Al Haines from Project Gutenberg.

A French version is also available on the Internet Archive, under the title: *L'art roman dans la baie du Mont Saint-Michel*.

Please see other medieval projects at: <https://marielebert.wordpress.com/#art>

Contact information: marie.lebert@gmail.com



002. Twelve small Romanesque churches.

These churches (shown here as blue spots) are located in Southern Manche, i.e. the southern part of the Manche department, in Normandy, along the coast or in the countryside. From north to south, these blue spots show the churches of Saint-Martin-le-Vieux, Bréville, Yquelon, Saint-Pair-sur-Mer, Angey, Saint-Jean-le-Thomas, Dragey, Genêts, Saint-Léonard-de-Vains, Saint-Loup and Saint-Quentin-sur-le-Homme, without forgetting a beautiful Romanesque gate in Sartilly. This region has belonged to Cotentin for its northern part and to Avranchin (the Avranches region) for its southern part, from the Middle Ages until now. The limit between Cotentin and Avranchin is the Thar, a small river that flows into the Channel (and shown below Granville on this map). This map was digitized by Georges Cercel.



003. A rare map of the Mont Saint-Michel Bay.

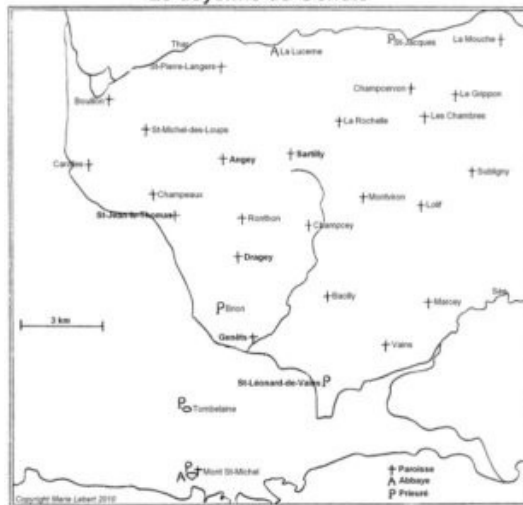
In the Middle Ages, this region was rich, with more people living on the coast than inside the land. The economic life was active, with fisheries and salines near Saint-Martin-de-Bréhal, Bréville and Saint-Léonard-de-Vains, with pitch sand and kelp used as fertilizers, and with a number of intensive cultures. This rare map dated circa 1630 belongs to the Heritage Fund of the Granville City Library. Photo by Claude Rayon.



004. The Deanery of Saint-Pair.

The parishes of Saint-Martin-le-Vieux, Bréville, Yquelon and Saint-Pair-sur-Mer were part of the Deanery of Saint-Pair, one of the five deaneries of the Archidiachoné of Coutances. The Archidiachoné of Coutances was one of the four archidiachonés of the Diocese of Coutances. The three other ones were the archidiachonés of Cotentin, Bauplois and Val-de-Vire. Map by Marie Lebert.

Le doyenné de Genêts

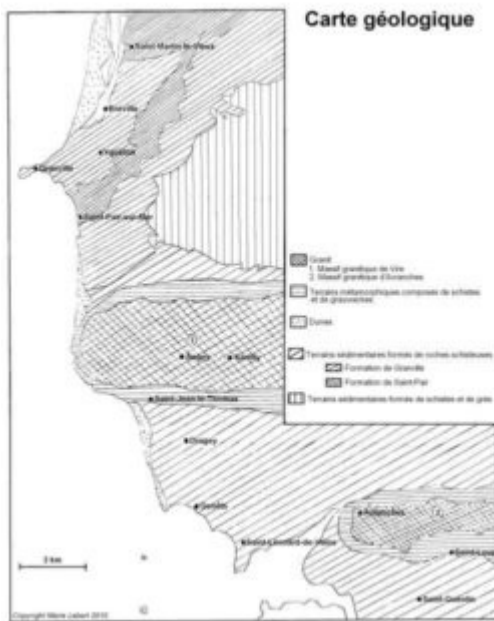
**005. The Deanery of Genêts.**

The parishes of Angey, Sartilly, Saint-Jean-le-Thomas, Dragey and Genêts were part of the Deanery of Genêts and the Archidiaconé of Avranches, as well as the priory of Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The Archidiaconé of Avranches included three other deaneries: the Deanery of Avranches, the Deanery of Tirepied (that included the parish of Saint-Loup) and the Deanery of the Chrétienté (Christendom). The Deanery of the Chrétienté included nine parishes around the episcopal town of Avranches, including the parish of Saint-Quentin-sur-le-Homme. Map by Marie Lebert.

Les chemins montois

**006. The medieval routes going to Mont Saint-Michel.**

This region was crossed by several routes used by pilgrims to reach Mont Saint-Michel. At the north of Avranches, we had from west to east the shore route coming from Saint-Pair-sur-Mer, the coastal route coming from Saint-Pair-sur-Mer (a different route), the route coming from Coutances, the route coming from Saint-Lô, and the route coming from Caen. At the south of Avranches, the same route was used by the pilgrims coming from Tinchebray, Condé-sur-Noireau, Falaise or Lisieux to reach Mont Saint-Michel. Map by Marie Lebert.



007. The geological map of the region.

All these churches were built in granite and schist, which were the local stones. Sedimentary grounds formed by schist rocks surround two large granite grounds, those of Vire and Avranches. Laying down from east to west, the granite ground of Vire is around five kilometres large, and ends on the west with the cliffs of Carolles and Champeaux. Laying down from west to east, the granite ground of Avranches is narrower, only from two to four kilometres large. These granite grounds are both surrounded by a metamorphic ring formed with schist rocks and grauwack (a kind of schist) rocks. The ground of Saint-Pair is a flysch (detritic ground) formed with grauwack rocks, siltit rocks et black argilit rocks with some schist inside. The ground of Granville is a flysch formed with grauwack rocks alternating with schist rocks. Map by Marie Lebert.



008. Saint-Martin-le-Vieux. Its location.

The village of Saint-Martin-le-Vieux is located between Bréhal and the sea, near the haven of the Venlée, two kilometers west of Bréhal and nine kilometers north of Granville. Saint-Martin-le-Vieux was situated on the medieval route coming from Cherbourg and going to Saint-Pair-sur-Mer before reaching Mont Saint-Michel, the final destination for many pilgrims.



009. Saint-Martin-le-Vieux. The Romanesque church.

The church, in ruins, stands on a hill. The church was under St Martin's patronage, and its second saint was St. Eutropius. The parish belonged to the Deanery of St-Pair and the Archidiaconé of Coutances. Foulques Paynel, probably a relative of Guillaume Paynel, founder of the Hambye Abbey in 1145, gave to the abbey part of the tithe of the parish of Saint-Martin-le-Vieux, a donation mentioned in the Cartulary of the Hambye Abbey. During the French Revolution, the church was used as an arsenal and all its furniture was sold. It became a church again in 1801 but, after some fears it would collapse, the church was no longer used in 1805, and people went to the church of Bréhal. Since that time, the parish of Saint-Martin-le-Vieux is part of the parish of Bréhal. Photo by Claude Rayon.



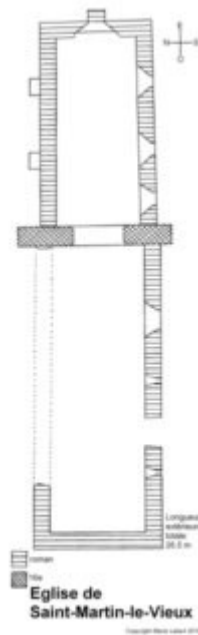
010. Saint-Martin-le-Vieux. The Romanesque ruins.

The double belfry was added in the 16th century. The ruins were overgrown by vegetation for a while. The masonry is made of irregular blocks in schist and granite. The arches and abutments of the openings are in granite. The schist is the local stone. The granite could come from the granite ground near Vire a few miles south. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



011. Saint-Martin-le-Vieux. The Romanesque ruins.

Between the choir and the nave, a double belfry (double because intended for two bells) was added in the 16th century, and built in pink granite from Chausey, a Channel island not far from Granville. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



012. Saint-Martin-le-Vieux. The church plan.

Oriented from west to east, like most churches, the rectangular building is formed by a long nave and a flat apse choir. The whole building has an external length of 26,5 meters and an external width of 6,4 meters (width of the frontage). The double belfry added in the 16th century rises between nave and choir. Plan by Marie Lebert.



013. Saint-Martin-le-Vieux. The south wall of the Romanesque nave.

The large bay with a lowered centering was probably added in the 16th century, during the building of the double belfry. On the right of this large bay, the centering of the small Romanesque bay is carved in a granite block. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



014. Saint-Martin-le-Vieux. The south wall of the Romanesque nave.

This early Romanesque door has a lowered centering and two abutments with chamfered edges. The small bay on the left is also Romanesque. The masonry of the walls is made of irregular blocks of schist and granite. Elements of "opus spicatum" (fishbone masonry) are visible, a proof that the south wall is the oldest part of the church. Above the gate, the little trefoil bay was probably added in the 16th century, during the building of the belfry. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



015. Saint-Martin-le-Vieux. The south wall of the Romanesque nave (detail).

Like the Romanesque gate, this small bay has a lowered centering and abutments in granite. Photo by Claude Rayon.



016. Saint-Martin-le-Vieux. The double belfry.

Behind the old cross stands the 16th-century double belfry (intended for two bells) built in granite from Chausey. Photo by Claude Rayon.



017. Bréville. Its Location.

The village of Bréville is located on the coast, about six kilometers north of Granville. Bréville was situated on a medieval route coming from Cherbourg and going to Saint-Pair-sur-Mer before reaching Mont Saint-Michel, the final destination for many pilgrims.



018. Bréville. The Romanesque church in front of the sand dunes.

In the background, we see Granville and its roofs on the left. In the Middle Ages, Granville was a small fishing village with a few houses, and the main town was Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. Photo by Claude Rayon.



019. Bréville. The Romanesque church among the trees.

In the 12th century, Bréville had an active economic life, with fisheries and salines, pitch sand and kelp used as fertilizers, and intensive crops. The parish was the property of Mont Saint-Michel since 1022, when Richard II, duke of Normandy, gave the Barony of Saint-Pair to Mont Saint-Michel. In the 13th century, the patronage was secular, with Guillelmus de Breinville at the seigneur between 1251 and 1279. The tithe was shared between the parish priest and the abbot of Mont Saint-Michel. In the 16th century, Bréville, with its church and salines, was a prebend belonging to the Coutances Cathedral. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



020. Bréville. The Romanesque church among the trees.

The church was under the patronage of Our Lady (Notre Dame, in French), and its second saint was St. Helier. The parish belonged to the Deanery of Saint-Pair and the Archidiaconé of Coutances. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



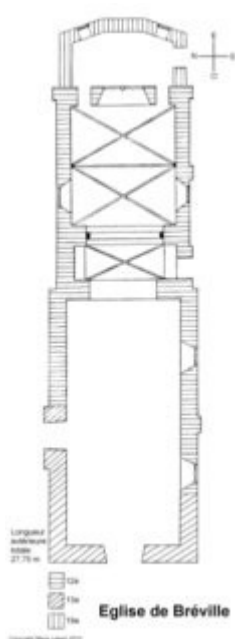
021. Bréville. The Romanesque church.

The church is composed of a two-span nave followed by a two-span choir with a flat apse. The square tower rises between choir and nave. Most of the nave, the tower base and the side walls of the choir are Romanesque, probably from the second half of the 12th century. The masonry is made of irregular blocks of schist. Granite is used for the buttresses, the abutments of openings, the attached piers, the columns and the arches. Photo by Claude Rayon.



022. Bréville. The Romanesque church with its sacristy.

The sacristy is the five-sided small building in the extension of the choir. It was added much later, in the 19th century. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



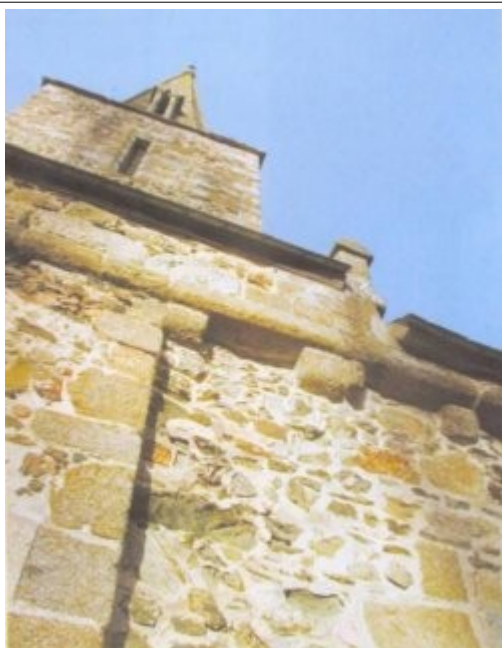
023. Bréville. The church plan.

Oriented from west to east, like most churches, the rectangular building is formed by a two-row nave and a two-row choir with a flat apse. The whole building has an external length of 27,75 meters and an external width of 7,65 meters (width of the frontage). The tower rises between choir and nave. The small five-sided building in the extension of the choir houses the sacristy. Plan by Marie Lebert.



024. Bréville. The church tower, between choir and nave.

The church tower has a Romanesque base, while its floor in slight recess and its spire are from the late 15th or early 16th century. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



025. Bréville. The church tower reaching the sky.

Photo by Claude Rayon.



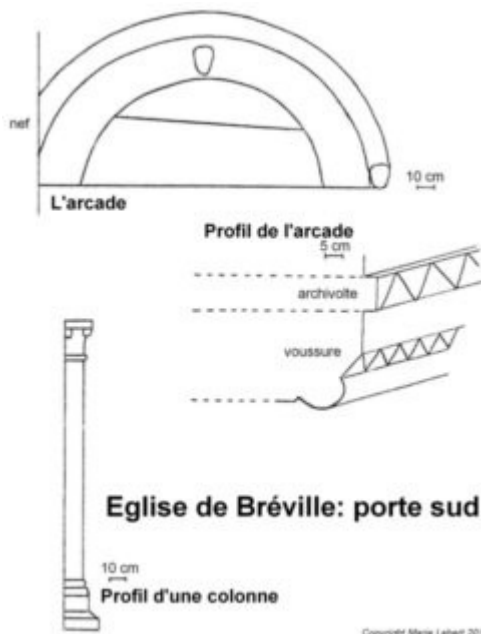
026. Bréville. The first floor and spire of the church tower.

The first floor is opened on each side by a long narrow opening. The octagonal stone spire has angles rounded by tori, with a small gable surrounded by two thin columns in the extension of each opening. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



027. Bréville. The Romanesque gate.

This gate is opened in the tower base (south side). Its semi-circular arch is formed by a grain molded by a torus followed by a chamfer carved with a slightly visible saw-teeth pattern. The archivolt is a thick band adorned with a saw-teeth pattern in high relief carved with a hollow row of triangular sticks. The archivolt rests on the right on a stone carved with a human head, while disappearing on the left into the masonry of the nave. The central keystone of the arch is adorned with a large human head carved in high relief. The capital baskets of the attached columns are carved with two angle hooks. The two human heads, carved in a limestone, didn't resist well to the test of time, as well as the angle hooks. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



028. Bréville. Sketch of the Romanesque gate.

The Romanesque gate is situated in the tower base (south side). Sketch by Marie Lebert.



029. Bréville. The Romanesque gate (detail).

Above the gate opened in the tower base, a human head carved in a limestone didn't resist well to the test of time, unlike the heads carved in granite in the south gate of the church of Yquelon. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



030. Bréville. The Romanesque gate (detail).

The archivolt of the gate rests on a granite stone carved with a human head. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



031. Bréville. A Romanesque modillion.

This modillion is carved with a human head, under the cornice of the church. Most of the other modillions are recent, plain and only chamfered. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



032. Bréville. A Romanesque modillion.

This modillion, carved with a human head, stands above the bay opened in the second row of the nave. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



033. Bréville. The church choir.

Its ribbed vault is from the late 15th or early 16th century. The tiles of the second row of the choir are from 1863. The floor of the first row is covered with schist pavings from Beauchamps laid down in 1969. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



034. Bréville. The church nave.

Its wooden ceiling was replaced with a plaster ceiling in 1852. The door and the large bay visible in the back wall (the west wall of the frontage) do not have much character because of the rebuilding of the church frontage in 1783. The pegged oak door is from 1970. The walls were covered with a lime plaster in 1969, and the floor was covered with schist pavings from Beauchamps the same year. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



035. Bréville. The church nave.

The plaster ceiling from 1852 was recently replaced by a wooden ceiling, like in old times. Photo by Claude Rayon.



036. Bréville. The tower base, between choir and nave.

In the foreground, an arch with chamfered edges rests on half-attached columns. This arch was rebuilt during the renovation of the choir in the 15th or 16th century. In the background, the arch between the tower base and the nave belongs to the original Romanesque building. This slightly triangular arch with irregular quoins, rests on two thick attached piers. The pier impost is molded with a chamfered band. Photo by Alain Dermigny.

**037. Bréville. The main altar.**

The main altar is situated in the apse of the choir, with a statue of Our Lady on the left - the church is under her patronage - and a statue of St. Helier - the second saint of the church - on the right. Photo by Alain Dermigny.

**038. Bréville. The main altar (detail).**

Part of the main altar, in the apse of the choir, a statue of Our Lady, the patron saint of the church. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



039. Bréville. The main altar (détail).

Part of the main altar, in the apse of the choir, the statue of St. Helier, second saint of the church. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



040. Bréville. The fountain of St. Héliér.

This fountain was surmounted by the statue of St. Helier, that is now in the background, on the right. Photo by Claude Rayon.



041. Yquelon. Its location.

The village of Yquelon is located two kilometers from Granville, between the villages of Donville-les-Bains and Saint-Nicolas, at the south of the Boscq river. The name "Yquelon" has Scandinavian roots and means "oak branch". Yquelon was situated on the medieval route coming from Cherbourg and going to Saint-Pair-sur-Mer before reaching Mont Saint-Michel, the final destination for many pilgrims.



042. Yquelon. The Romanesque church.

The territory of the parish of Yquelon was part of the Barony of Saint-Pair, owned by Mont Saint-Michel since 1022, when Richard II, duke of Normandy, gave the barony to the abbey. The lord of Yquelon, Rogerius de Ikelon, signed two main charters of the Lucerne Abbey in 1162. In the 13th century, the patronage was certainly secular. The tithe was shared in three parts between the parish priest, who was receiving most of it, the Abbey of Montmorel (located in Poilley, near Ducey), and the St. Blaise leper hospital in Champeaux. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



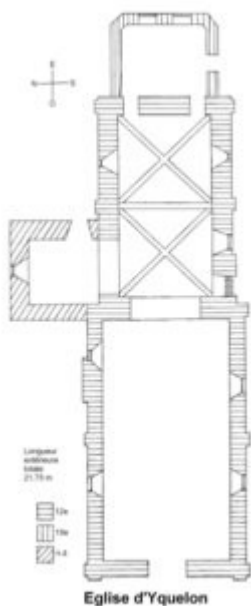
043. Yquelon. The Romanesque church.

The church of Yquelon is under St. Pair's patronage, and its second saint is St. Maur. The parish belonged to the Deanery of Saint-Pair and the Archidiachoné of Coutances. The church of Yquelon has similarities with the neighbouring church of Bréville. They were both built in the second half of the 12th century. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



044. Yquelon. The Romanesque church.

The church is formed by a two-row nave followed by a two-row choir with a flat apse. The large square tower – with its three floors in slight recess and a saddleback roof - is adjacent to the first row on the north side of the choir. The rectangular openings show that the tower was partly rebuilt since the 12th century. Photo by Claude Rayon.



045. Yquelon. The church plan.

Oriented from west to east, like most churches, the rectangular building has a two-row nave followed by a two-row choir with a flat apse. The whole building has an external length of 21,75 meters and an external width of 7,6 meters (width of the frontage). The tower is adjacent to the first row of the north side of the choir. Plan by Marie Lebert.



046. Yquelon. The Romanesque frontage.

Its masonry is made from irregular blocks of schist and granite, that are both local stones. The wall is consolidated at each end with a flat buttress resting on a stone wall. The three semi-circular bays above the portal were opened in 1896, to replace a large rectangular bay, that had itself replaced the two small original Romanesque bays. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



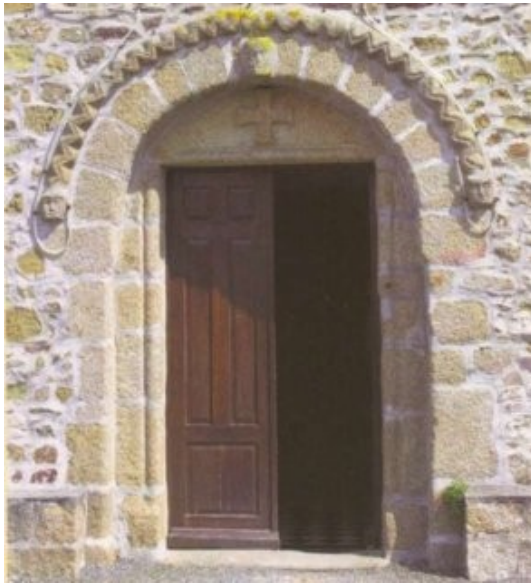
047. Yquelon. The Romanesque frontage.

Its gable wall is surmounted by an antefix cross with bifid branches. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



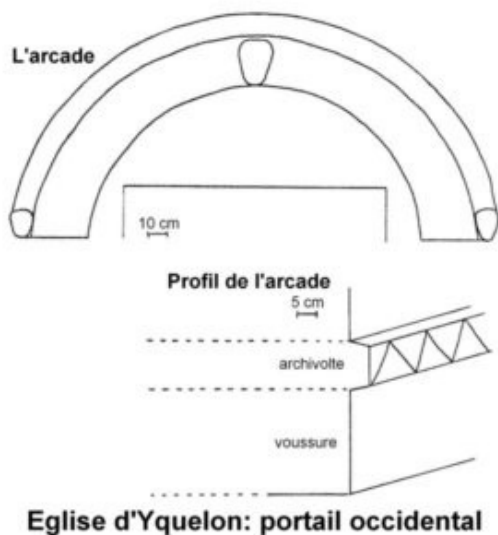
048. Yquelon. The Romanesque frontage.

The oculus in the gable wall is also Romanesque. Its band is adorned with billets, with a stone carved with two human heads in high relief in its lower part. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



049. Yquelon. The Romanesque west gate.

Its semi-circular arch is formed by a plain grain resting on plain abutments and surrounded by an archivolt. The archivolt is a prominent band adorned with a saw-teeth pattern in high relief carved with a hollow row of triangular sticks. Its two ends rest on a granite stone carved with a human head. The keystone of the arch is adorned with a human head in higher relief. The inside abutments are molded with a small column with a square abacus and base. These abutments support a tympanum in granite, which was restored and carved with a cross in 1897. Photo by Claude Rayon.



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050. Yquelon. Sketch of the Romanesque west gate.

This gate has similarities with the south gate of the church of Bréville, a few kilometers away. Sketch by Marie Lebert.



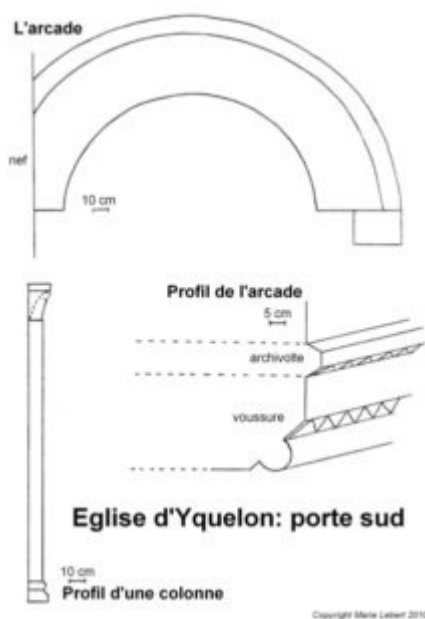
051. Yquelon. The Romanesque west gate (detail).

The archivolt of the semi-circular arch of the gate rests at each end on a granite stone carved with a human head. These granite heads resisted more gracefully to the test of time than the limestone heads in the church of Bréville. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



052. Yquelon. The Romanesque south gate.

Its semi-circular arch is formed of a grain molded with a torus and surmounted by a chamfer carved with a slightly visible saw-teeth pattern. The arch is surrounded by an archivolt formed by a thick band with chamfered edges. The lower chamfer is also adorned with a slightly visible saw-teeth pattern. The inner grain rests on two attached columns through capitals. Their basket, surmounted by a square abacus, is adorned with small angle hooks. This gate suffered from later construction work. The two capitals lack their astragalus, are not aligned with the shaft of the columns and the beginning of the arch, the torus of which is cut. The outer grain and archivolt disappear into the masonry of the nave on the left, whereas they rest on a slightly prominent and chamfered large stone on the right. Photo by Claude Rayon.



053. Yquelon. Sketch of the Romanesque south gate.

This gate too - like the west gate - has similarities with the south gate of the church of Bréville, a few kilometers away. Sketch by Marie Lebert.



054. Yquelon. The Romanesque choir.

The nave opens on the choir with a thick triumphal arch resting on two piers embedded into the thick wall. The two bays of the choir are separated by another thick arch. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



055. Yquelon. The Romanesque choir.

Each row is surmounted by a ribbed vault. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



056. Yquelon. The Romanesque choir.

The large ribs of the vault are adorned with two thick angular tori surrounding a small triangular molding. This Romanesque ribbed vault was probably one of the first ribbed vaults built in Normandy. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



057. Yquelon. The Romanesque choir.

The ceiling arches and ribs rest on reversed pyramid-shaped bases. Surmounted by a slightly chamfered square abacus, the central base supports both the fallout of a ceiling arch and that of two ribs. Photo by Alain Dermigny.





058. Yquelon. The Romanesque choir (detail).

The vault keystone is carved with geometric patterns in low relief within a circle. Photo by Claude Rayon.



059. Yquelon. The enfeu and its tombstone.

In the north wall of the nave, an enfeu (recess for a tombstone) with a lowered centering houses a 12th-century tombstone in soft limestone depicting a knight. Mr. Lomas described it in 1887 in the "Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie" (Bulletin of the Society of Antique Dealers in Normandy): "The tombstone bears a knight in relief, depicted with his hands clasped, his head resting on a pillow, and his greyhound at his feet. (...) This person belongs to the powerful

	<p>family of Yquelon." As the length of the enfeu (2.15 meters) is exactly the length of the tombstone, we can guess that the tombstone - after being there for centuries - was probably buried in the cemetery during the French Revolution, before being discovered in 1885 and recovering its initial place in February 1893. Photo by Claude Rayon.</p>
	<p>060. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. Its location.</p> <p>The village of Saint-Pair-sur-Mer is located on the coast, around three kilometers south of Granville. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer was a prosperous town and the vital center of the region until the construction of Granville in the 15th century, with many people moving to Granville then. Saint-Pair grew again in 1880 with the development of seaside resorts. Medieval routes starting from Saint-Pair-sur-Mer – a coastal route and a shore route - were used by pilgrims to reach Mont Saint-Michel, and are still used today by modern pilgrims and visitors.</p>
	<p>061. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. The present church.</p> <p>The church is under St. Pair's patronage, and its second saint is St. Gaud. The church is a place of pilgrimage dedicated to the worship of St. Gaud, whose sarcophagus was found in 1131 during the building of the Romanesque church. Much later, in 1880, the Romanesque nave was demolished to be replaced by a much larger nave with a transept to accommodate the many parishioners of this popular seaside resort. The new church was consecrated on August 26, 1888. Photo by Claude Rayon.</p>



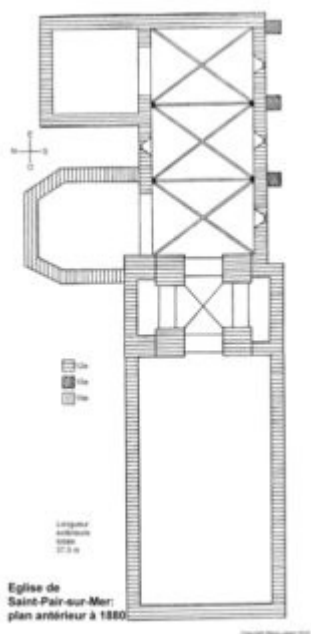
062. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. The present church.

The church is shown here from a north-east angle to get a full view of the large building, while avoiding nearby houses and cars. Photo by Marie Lebert.



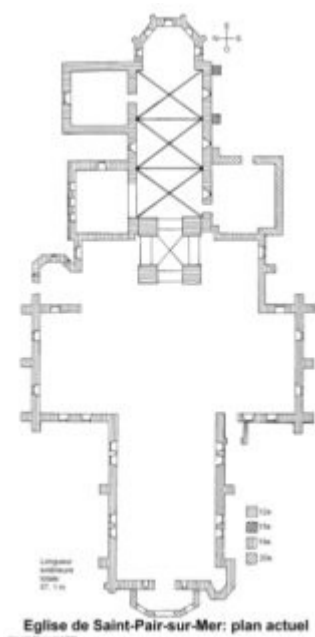
063. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. The former Romanesque church.

This drawing by E. Biguet was published in 1934 in the journal "Le Pays de Granville". The Romanesque nave was demolished in 1880 to be replaced by a much larger nave with a transept. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



064. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. The church plan before 1880.

An imaginative plan based on reality. The total external length was 37.5 meters. The external width of the nave was 11.1 meters (and still is in the recent church). Plan by Marie Lebert.



066. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. The plan of the present church.

Oriented from west to east, like most churches, the building has a two-row nave with a porch, a large transept and a three-row choir with a semi-circular apse. The external length of the whole building is 57,1 meters. The external width of the nave is 11,1 meters. The square tower rises at the crossing of the transept. The transept arms are opened by two apses on their eastern side. The choir opens on two chapels on its north side, one towards the apse and one towards the tower. At the angle formed by the south transept arm and the choir, a rectangular building houses the sacristy. Plan by Marie Lebert.



066. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. The Romanesque tower.

The tower foundations can be precisely dated, which is very seldom for a Romanesque part. They date from 1131. A contemporary manuscript mentioned the discovery of St. Gaud's sarcophagus in the choir during the digging of the foundations. The same manuscript gives the name of the architect – Rogerius Altomansiunculo - who supervised the work. To know the name of the architect is quite unusual too. Most architects of the time remained anonymous. Photo by Claude Rayon.



067. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. The Romanesque tower.

The tower is square, with two floors surmounted by an octagonal spire. A group of two blind arches adorn tow sides of the first floor (north and south). Large twin bays adorn the second floor on all four sides. Divided by a small column with a square abacus and a square base, these twin bays are surmounted by a semi-circular arch molded with a simple torus, and resting on two attached columns. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



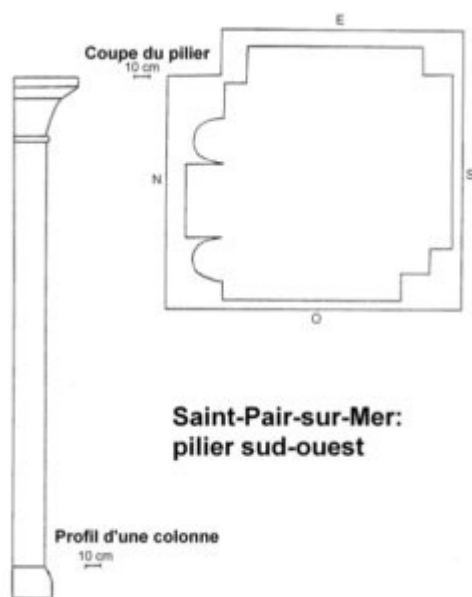
068. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. The Romanesque tower.

The two floors of the tower. Photo by Claude Rayon.



069. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. The Romanesque tower.

The tower rests on four massive symmetrical piers supporting four slightly triangular arches. These arches surround the groin vault beneath the tower. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



070. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. Sketch of the south-western pier of the tower.

This pier is salient on three sides (east, west and south). On its north side, an attached pier surrounded by two attached columns rests on a stoneboard. Molded as a chamfered band, the impost above the pier forms the abacus of the capitals of the two columns. The capital baskets are carved, with a square base surmounted by a chamfer. The pier rests on a broader square base with chamfered edges. Sketch by Marie Lebert.



071. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. The north pier of the tower (detail).

Resting on a stoneboard, an attached pier surrounded by two attached columns is surmounted by an impost molded as a chamfered band. The impost also forms the abacus of the capitals. The capital baskets, in granite, are carved with angle hooks. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



072. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. A carved capital basket.

Under the tower, a capital of the north-west pier has a granite basket roughly carved in low relief with the bust of a man whose head is big. His right arm is raised and his left arm is folded over his chest. An oak branch is visible on the right. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



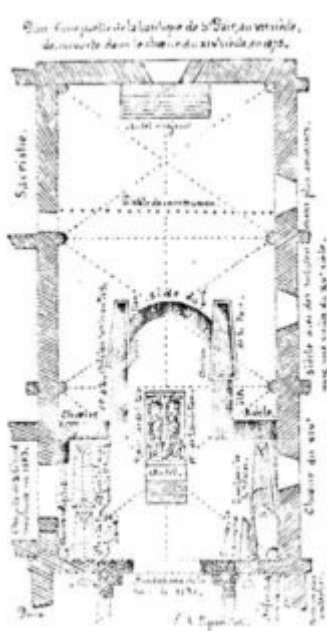
073. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. A carved capital basket.

Under the tower, another granite basket is carved with an angle hook in low relief. All the capital baskets of the north-west, north-east and south-east piers are adorned with angle hooks of this kind. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



074. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. St. Pair's sarcophagus.

A 19th-century stone altar covers St. Pair's shell limestone sarcophagus. St. Pair (482-565) first founded a chapel with St. Scubilion, the walls of which are still underneath the choir of the present church. St. Pair also gave his name to the village, that was previously known under the Roman name Scessiacus (Scissy). St. Pair and St. Scubilion's sarcophagi were found in 1875, during the excavations made by abbot F. Baudry. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



075. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. The plan of the oratory sketched by abbot F. Baudry.

In September 1875, during excavations in the church choir, abbot F. Baudry found part of the foundations of the 6th-century oratory, as well as several shell limestone sarcophagi: the sarcophagi of St. Pair and St. Scubilion and, nearby, those of St. Senier and St. Aroaste. St. Gaud's sarcophagus had already been found in 1131 while digging the foundations of the Romanesque tower. This plan is included in "Vie des Saints du Diocèse de Coutances et d'Avranches" (The Life of the Saints in the Diocese of Coutances and Avranches), a book by Canon Pigeon published in Avranches in 1888.




076. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. The foundations of the 6th-century oratory.

On the floor of the second row of the present choir, the double line of black tiles surrounded by a row of clear tiles shows the exact place of the foundations of the old oratory. The underneath foundations form a semi-circular apse continuing with side walls that disappear in the Romanesque building. Fortunatus (530-600), bishop of Poitiers, wrote in his "Vie de Saint Pair" (St. Pair's Life) that the cells of the early monks were built beside the sea. Then monks moved their dwellings on the banks of the Saigue river (where the church presently is), attracting some people that settled around the oratory in a new village named Scissy. In the foreground, a white gravestone shows the spot where St. Pair's sarcophagus was buried and discovered. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



077. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. St. Gaud's reliquary.

This reliquary stands on the altar covering St. Gaud's shell limestone sarcophagus. St. Gaud (400-491) has its own chapel, built in the 19th century in the north wall of the choir, the church being a place of pilgrimage dedicated to his worship. After forty years as the second bishop of Evreux, St. Gaud resigned to come and retire in the solitude of Scissy. St. Gaud's sarcophagus was found in 1131 while digging the foundations of

	the Romanesque tower. Photo by Alain Dermigny.
	<p>078. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. St. Gaud's reliquary.</p> <p>On this photo taken in 2009, the reliquary is adorned with both ex-votos and flowers. Photo by Claude Rayon.</p>
	<p>079. Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. The old baptismal font.</p> <p>Photo by Claude Rayon.</p>
	<p>080. Angey. Its Location.</p> <p>The village of Angey is located about three kilometers west from the village of Sartilly. The parish of Angey has been part of the parish of Sartilly since 1914. The church of Angey is only used from time to time for weddings and funerals.</p>



081. Angey. The church and its cemetery.

The church of Angey is under St. Samson's patronage, and its second saint is St. John the Baptist. The parish of Angey belonged to the Deanery of Genêts and the Archidiaconé of Avranches. In 1162, the church of Angey and its dependencies were given to the Lucerne Abbey by William of Saint-Jean, the second founder of the abbey. The abbot of the Lucerne Abbey was the seigneur of the church from then on. Photo by Marie Lebert.



082. Angey. The church with its Romanesque choir.

The base of the tower is probably Romanesque too, but from a later period, because its masonry is slightly different from the masonry of the choir. Photo by Claude Rayon.



083. Angey. The church plan.

Oriented from west to east, like most churches, the rectangular building is formed by a long nave and a one-row choir. The whole building has an external length of 26,85 meters and an external width of 7,5 meters (width of the frontage). The tower rises between choir and nave. Plan by Marie Lebert.

**084. Angey. The church choir.**

The choir has a flat apse, and the tower rises between choir and nave. Photo by Claude Rayon.

**085. Angey. The baptismal font.**

The baptismal font, probably from the 14th century, is adorned with carved trefoil arches in low relief. The arches surmount a carved rope, probably a symbol of the religious community. Photo by Claude Rayon.



086. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. Its location.

The village of Saint-Jean-le-Thomas is located on the coast, twelve kilometers south of Granville and nine kilometers north of Avranches. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas was situated on two medieval routes (from Saint-Pair-sur-Mer and from Coutances) used by pilgrims to go to Mont Saint-Michel. Another route from Saint-Pair to Mont Saint-Michel was a shore route crossing the sand dunes nearby.



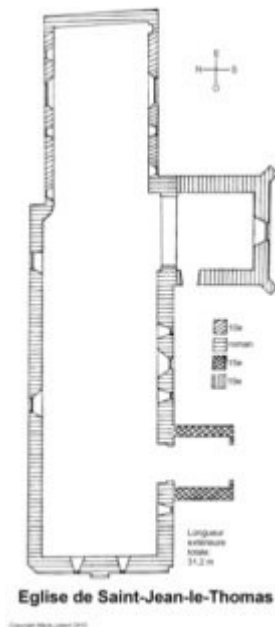
087. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The church.

The church is under St. John the Baptist's patronage. The parish of Saint-Jean-le-Thomas belonged to the Deanery of Genêts and the Archidiaconé of Avranches. In 917, William Longsword, second Duke of Normandy, gave to the Mont Saint-Michel Abbey the village of Saint-Jean-at-the-end-of-the-sea, with its church, its mill, its vineyards and its meadows. In the 12th century, Robert I, Duke of Normandy, gave again to Mont Saint-Michel the seigneurie of Saint-Jean and its dependencies. In 1162, the local seigneur, William of Saint-Jean, second founder of the Lucerne Abbey, gave to the abbey the church of Saint-Jean-le-Thomas with its dependencies, including many properties nearby and in England. In the 15th century, the church was still owned by the Lucerne Abbey, the abbot of the Lucerne being the seigneur of the church. Photo by Claude Rayon.



088. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The church.

The Romanesque nave of the church dates from the 11th or early 12th century. The pre-Romanesque flat apse choir is probably from the 10th century. The Romanesque gate opened in the south wall of the nave has a large porch from the 15th century. The massive square tower stands along the south wall of the nave, with two floors surmounted by an openwork balustrade. The tower was built in 1895 to replace a collapsing Romanesque tower. The new tower was built with granite rocks from the Saint-James quarries. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



089. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The church plan.

Oriented from west to east, like most churches, the rectangular building is formed by a long nave and a flat apse choir. The building has an external length of 31.2 meters and an external width of 8.1 meters (width of the frontage). The church gate is opened in the south wall of the nave, with a porch. The tower rises along the south wall of the nave. Plan by Marie Lebert.



090. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The church frontage and tower.

The wall of the church frontage is surmounted by a small glacis covered with schist plates, with a gable wall rising behind it. A flat buttress consolidating the frontage ends with a glacis at the base of the gable wall. The two small Romanesque bays on both sides of the buttress were reopened in 1973, during the restoration of the church choir. The massive tower was rebuilt in 1895. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



091. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The south wall of the pre-Romanesque choir.

The choir has similarities with the church Notre-Dame-sous-Terre in Mont Saint-Michel, that was built by the Benedictine community shortly after they settled down in the abbey in 966. In both buildings, the bay centerings are made of brick quoins, and walls are made of fairly regular small blocks of granite joined with a thick mortar. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



092. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The south wall of the pre-Romanesque choir.

On the left of the large central bay, a small Romanesque bay is clearly visible, with its centering and abutements in granite. Photo by Claude Rayon.



093. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The north wall of the pre-Romanesque choir.

The centerings of the high pre-Romanesque bays are made of brick quoins. The large semi-circular bay with a trefoil arch was opened in 1895, when the tower was rebuilt. The pre-Romanesque bays were discovered and reopened during the restoration of the choir in 1965 by Yves-Marie Froidevaux, chief architect at the French Historic Monuments. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



094. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The north wall of the pre-Romanesque choir.

The masonry is made of fairly regular small blocks of granite joined with a thick mortar. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



095. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The north wall of the pre-Romanesque choir (detail).

The centering of this small pre-Romanesque bay is made with brick quoins. The same type of bays can be seen in the church Notre-Dame-sous-Terre, built around the same time at Mont Saint-Michel. Photo by Claude Rayon.



096. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The north wall of the pre-Romanesque choir.

The fairly regular granite blocks of the walls and the brick quoins of the bays are also visible inside, since the restoration of the choir in 1965 by Yves-Marie Froideveaux, chief architect at the French Historic Monuments. The five bays with centerings in brick quoins - three on the north wall and two on the south wall - were found and reopened at that time. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



097. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The pre-Romanesque choir.

The two large semi-circular bays opened on each side of the choir were added in 1895, during the construction of the new tower. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



098. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The pre-Romanesque choir and its vault.

The wooden barrel vault was added in 1965 and completed in 1973. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



099. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Romanesque nave.

This nave is probably from the 11th century and early 12th century. The two Romanesque bays of the frontage (in the background) were reopened in 1973 after being found under the plaster. The upper bay - a median bay situated in the gable wall - was walled up at the same time, but its granite abutments remain clearly visible. The barrel vault of the nave is in plaster. The floor is covered with large granite pavings. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



100. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Romanesque nave.

Another view of the nave, this time towards the choir. Photo by Claude Rayon.



101. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Romanesque nave.

Romanesque murals were found on the south wall of the nave, an exciting discovery because murals are almost non-existent in this region. These wall paintings, probably from the 12th century, was unknown until 1974 because they were covered with plaster. Colour spots caught the attention of abbot Porée, the parish priest, who then informed the French Fine Arts Department. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



102. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Romanesque murals.

This part, restored in December 1974, shows three paintings: first the struggle of a man against an angel on the tympanum of the walled-up gate, then a fight between two figures, and finally a country scene. These paintings are surrounded by decorative borders. These murals could be the work of pilgrims walking on the medieval route along the coast to go to Mont Saint-Michel. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



103. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Romanesque murals.

The tympanum of the sealed gate shows the battle of a man against an angel, "a fight that could be the one of Jacob against the angel sent by God, or God himself showed in a visible form", according to abbot Porée, the parish priest who discovered the murals in 1974. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



104. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Romanesque murals.

The same scene on the tympanum of the sealed gate, taken from a different angle to show the two foliage borders. Photo by Claude Rayon.



105. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Romanesque murals.

The same tympanum of the sealed gate, seen from the outside. Above the gate, a small Romanesque bay with its centering and abutments in granite. Photo by Claude Rayon.



106. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Romanesque murals.

In this country scene, with wheat ears visible on the left, a figure wearing a large cloak holds a flask while pouring wine in a cup held by another figure. On the right, a third figure holding a tillage tool has suffered the damages of time. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



107. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Romanesque murals.

The third painting, of which much has disappeared, is the struggle between (a) a figure wearing a cloak and whose head is surrounded by a halo and (b) an armored figure who seems to be on the ground. This could be the struggle of St. Michael against the Devil, according to abbot Porée, the parish priest who discovered the murals in 1974. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



108. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Romanesque murals (detail).

Between the country scene and the fight scene, this detail shows that the mural was painted directly on the lime plaster, which explains the clear background. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



109. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Romanesque murals (detail).

This partial view of the fight scene shows that all contours were drawn with ocher paint, and that inside surfaces were painted in ocher and buff. Only two colours were used, directly on the lime plaster. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



110. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Romanesque murals (detail).

The paintings are surrounded with a foliage border. The flourishes run between two horizontal stripes. The first stripe is painted in ocher (along the flourishes), and the second stripe is painted in buff (along the ocher stripe), with a row of white dots between these two colours. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



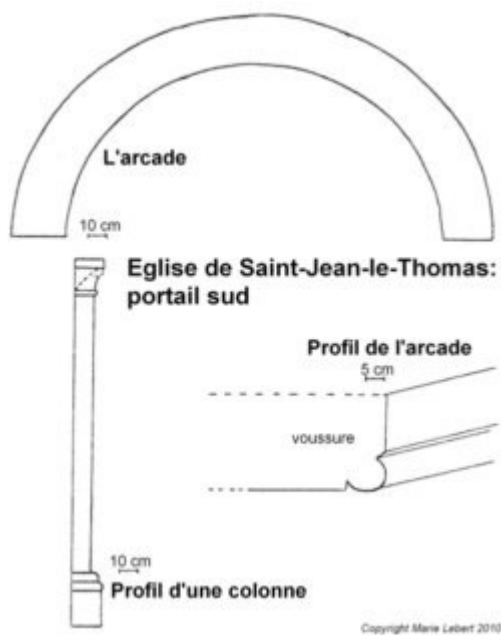
111. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Romanesque gate and its porch.

A Romanesque gate is opened in the south wall of the nave. Like often in this region, a porch was added later on – this one is from the 15th century - for pilgrims and parishioners to have two stone benches and a shelter from the rain and winds coming from the sea. Photo by Claude Rayon.



112. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Romanesque gate.

The semi-circular arch of the gate is formed of a grain adorned with a simple torus molding. The arch rests on two attached columns that seem an extension of the torus, with the same diameter. The columns are surmounted by capitals with a square abacus. The capital baskets are carved with barely visible small angle hooks. The square base is surmounted by a double torus. Photo by Claude Rayon.



113. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. Sketch of the Romanesque gate.

Sketch by Marie Lebert.



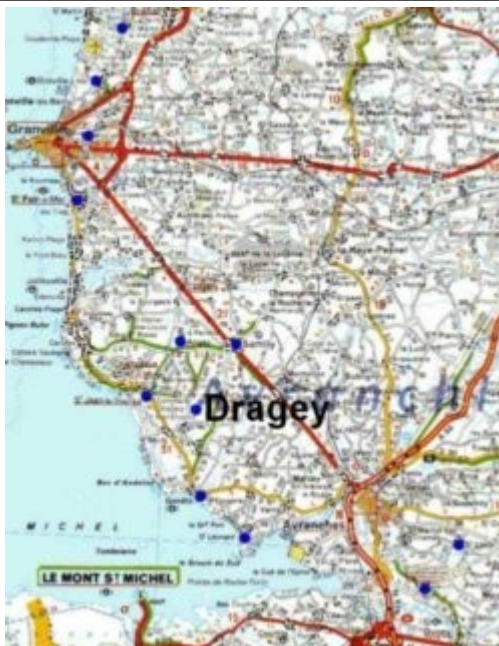
114. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Romanesque gate and its porch (detail).

The arch of the Romanesque portal is adorned with a torus. The stone roof of this 15th-century porch is made of irregular schiste plates joined with a thick mortar. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



115. Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. The Holy Virgin and her Child.

This stone statue stands above the Romanesque gate. It is protected from the rain by its 15th-century porch. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



116. Dragey. Its location.

The village of Dragey is located twenty kilometers south of Granville, and thirteen kilometers north of Avranches. Dragey was situated on three medieval routes (from Saint-Pair-sur-Mer, Coutances and Saint-Lô) used by pilgrims to go to Mont Saint-Michel. The shore route coming from Saint-Pair was crossing the nearby sand dunes of Dragey before reaching Mont Saint-Michel, the final destination for many pilgrims.



117. Dragey. Mont Saint-Michel seen from the church.

On the hill where the church stands, the contours of Mont Saint-Michel and Tombelaine emerge from the mist. For pilgrims, this view was the end of a long quest. The church of Dragey was given to Mont Saint-Michel by Robert I, Duke of Normandy, in the 11th century. Dragey and his church were among the dependencies of Saint-Jean-at-the-end-of-the-sea, that later became Saint-Jean-le-Thomas. Photo by Claude Rayon.



118. Dragey. The church.

Built on a hill, the church and its presbytery are located about one kilometer from the village. The church is placed under St. Medard's patronage, and the second saint is St. Eloi. The parish of Dragey belonged to the Deanery of Genêts and the Archidiachoné of Avranches. The Romanesque nave dates from the 11th or 12th century. The tower and the choir date from the 13th century. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



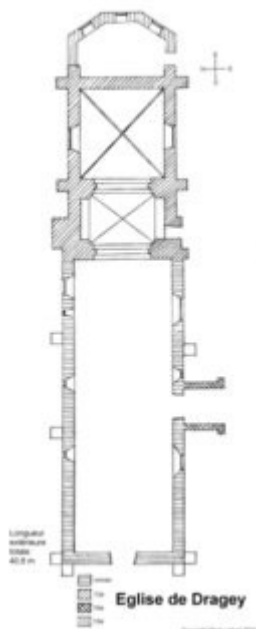
119. Dragey. The church.

The church of Dragey is not situated in the village, unlike most churches. Visible from far away on the coast, its tower was a landmark for seamen. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



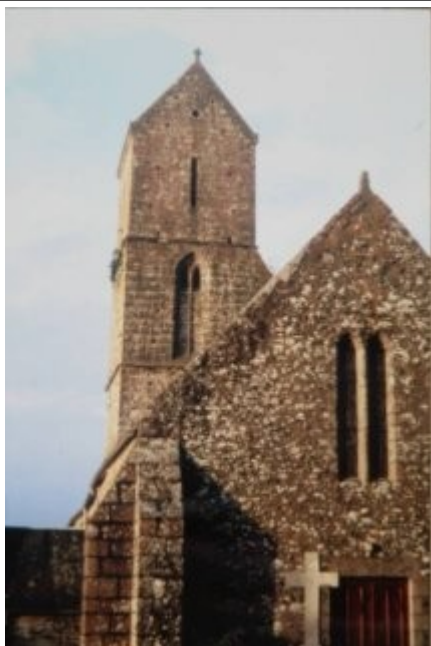
120. Dragey. The church.

The church has a one-row choir and a three-row nave. The tower rises between choir and nave. Only the nave is Romanesque. The choir and the tower date from the 13th century. Photo by Claude Rayon.



121. Dragey. The church plan.

Oriented from west to east, like most churches, the rectangular building is formed by a three-row nave and a one-row choir. This whole building has an external length of 40,8 meters and an external width of 9,1 meters (width of the frontage). The tower rises between choir and nave. Plan by Marie Lebert.

**122. Dragey. The church front.**

Its masonry is made of irregular blocks of schist and granite, which are local stones. The frontage is consolidated on each side with two thick buttresses ending with a glacis. The large twin bay with a slightly triangular arch dates from the 13th century. After being sealed, it was reopened and restored in 1860, while the gate was replaced by a gate without much character. Photo by Alain Dermigny.

**123. Dragey. The south wall of the nave.**

The 16th-century porch of the Romanesque gate was reopened in 1969. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



124. Dragey. The gate of the tower base.

The tower base is opened by a 13th-century gate with a triangular arch. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



125. Dragey. The north wall of the nave.

The plaster of the side walls was scraped by the villagers to show the "opus spicatum" (fishbone masonry), at the request of Abbot Pierre Danguy, the parish priest between 1954 and 1974. The "opus spicatum" - and the schist plates arranged horizontally in between - attest that the church was built in the 11th century or early 12th century. The bay with a deep splay dates from the 13th century. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



126. Dragey. The north wall of the nave.

The villagers patiently scraped the plaster to show the "opus spicatum" (fishbone masonry), a sign that their church was early Romanesque. The inner plaster now only covers the top quarter of the walls. Photo by Claude Rayon.



127. Dragey. The north wall of the nave.

The large trefoil bay dates from the 13th century. A sealed Romanesque bay with a deep splay is on the right. Its arch is formed by a row of small granite quoins. This bay is the only remaining Romanesque bay in the church. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



128. Dragey. The north wall of the nave (detail).

The only remaining Romanesque bay in the church is sealed. It has a deep splay, with an arch formed by a row of small granite quoins. Photo by Claude Rayon.



129. Dragey. The church choir.

The large bays of the choir (on each side of the photograph) date from the 15th century. They replaced two small Romanesque bays, in order to bring more natural light into the choir. Photo by Alain Dermigny.

**130. Dragey. The baptismal font.**

This old baptismal font supports a more recent holy water font. Photo by Claude Rayon.

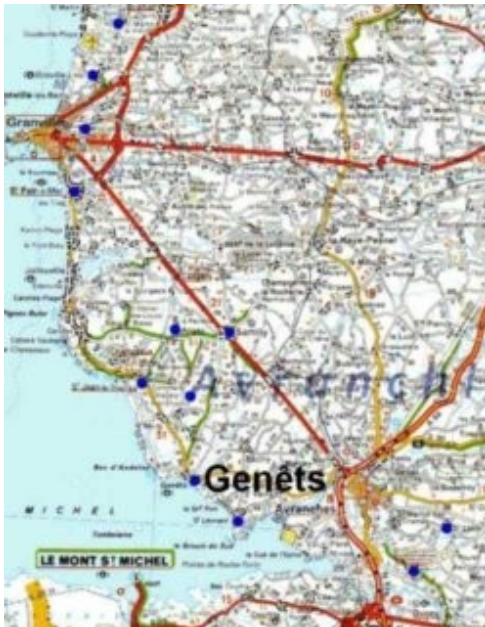
**131. Dragey. The stained glass window of a large twin bay.**

Situated in the south wall of the nave, this window is an ex-voto recounting one of the many drownings that occurred in the region. On 5 May 1921, Harry Iselin, the son of a family of landowners near Dragey, drowned with an American friend, while walking back from Mont Saint-Michel and crossing its dangerous sand strands. Photo by Claude Rayon.



132. Dragey. The stained glass window of a twin bay (detail).

This detail shows Mont Saint-Michel and its archangel. This large twin bay with a trefoil arch replaced in 1860 a rectangular opening, that replaced itself a small Romanesque bay in 1790. The other twin bays of the nave have the same story, as well as beautiful stained glass windows. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



133. Genêts. Its location.

The village of Genêts is located six kilometers north of Avranches. The village is facing Mont Saint-Michel, around four kilometers away. Genêts was situated on four medieval routes (from Saint-Pair-sur-Mer, Coutances, Saint-Lô and Caen) used by pilgrims to go to Mont Saint-Michel. After arriving in Genêts, they needed to go through dangerous sand strands to reach their final destination. The shore route from Saint-Pair-sur-Mer to Mont Saint-Michel was going through Bec d'Andaine, near Genêts. Genêts was the tidal port of Avranches, and a main town of Avranchin before its looting by Norman pirates in the 9th century. The Barony of Genêts was given in 1022 to Mont Saint-Michel by Richard II, Duke of Normandy, as well as the Barony of Saint-Pair and the Barony of Ardevon.



134. Genêts. The village and its church.

The center of a barony and a deanery, Genêts was an active and flourishing town under the first Norman dukes. In the early 14th century, Genêts had nearly 3,000 inhabitants, and its parish counted a church and seven chapels, with several priests. During the Hundred Years' War, Genêts was looted, fleeced and burned by the British troops in 1356. During the Religion Wars between Catholics and Protestants, Genêts was again sacked in 1562 by the troops of the Protestant Montgomery. During the French Revolution, Genêts lost its sergentery, its deanery, its fairs and its markets, and went from being a town to being a village. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



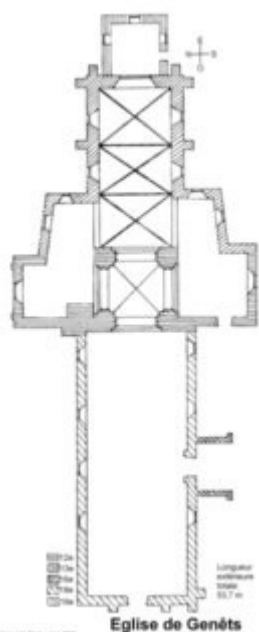
135. Genêts. The Romanesque church.

This church was the work of Robert of Torigni, Abbot of Mont Saint-Michel from 1154 to 1186. Built on the site of an older church, the Romanesque church was consecrated in 1157 by Herbert, Bishop of Avranches, along with Roger, Abbot of Bec-Hellouin. The church and cemetery of Genêts were granted the title of "Historic Monument" in 1959. Photo by Claude Rayon.



136. Genêts. The Romanesque church.

The church is composed of a broad nave, a transept and a three-row choir with a flat apse. A massive tower surmounted by a saddleback roof rises at the transept crossing. The Romanesque parts are the transept crossings, part of the transept arms and two-thirds of the tower. The porch of the south gate in the nave dates from the 16th century. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



137. Genêts. The church plan.

Oriented from west to east, like most churches, the building is formed by a wide nave, a transept and a three-row choir with a flat apse. The whole building has an external length of 53.7 meters, and an external width of 10.8 meters (width of the frontage). The first row of the choir opens north and south on two flat apse chapels, that open themselves on the transept arms. Plan by Marie Lebert.



138. Genêts. The north wall and the tower.

The tower is Romanesque on two thirds of its height. Its upper part was built in the early 16th century. The nave was entirely rebuilt in the middle of the 18th century. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



139. Genêts. The Romanesque transept.

Here is the wall of the north arm of the transept, with its gable wall. The masonry is made from irregular blocks of schist and granite. The schist is the local stone. The granite probably came from the granite ground of Avranches a few miles south-east. The gable wall is opened by a large semi-circular bay. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



140. Genêts. The tower.

Situated at the transept crossing, the tower is Romanesque on two thirds of its height, with blocks of granite of medium size. The upper part of the tower dates from the early 16th century, with much larger blocks of granite. While the first floor is blind, the second floor is open to the north, south and west by Romanesque twin bays (now sealed), that were extended with Gothic trefoil bays in the early 16th century. Photo by Alain Dermigny.

**141. Genêts. The tower (detail).**

The tower is surmounted by a saddleback roof, the base of which is hidden north and south by an openwork balustrade. Its corners are adorned with Gothic gargoyles carved as dogs, wolves and imaginary animals. Photo by Alain Dermigny.

**142. Genêts. The tower (detail).**

The same Gothic gargoyle, seen from another angle, is surmounted by an openwork balustrade hiding the base of the saddleback roof of the tower. Photo by Claude Rayon.

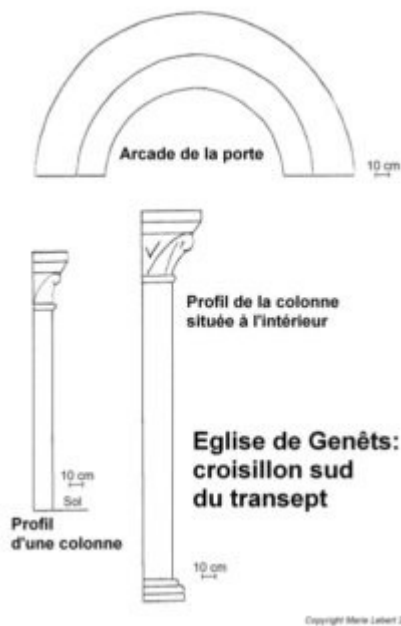
**143. Genêts. The tower (detail).**

Another Gothic gargoyle adorns an angle of the balustrade hiding the base of the saddleback roof of the tower. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



144. Genêts. The Romanesque gate in the south transept.

This heavy and simple gate date from the 11th century, with semi-circular plain grains and thick columns. It probably belonged to the building that was prior to the Romanesque church consecrated in 1157. The semi-circular arch is formed of two thick non-molded grains. The external grain rests on two thick attached columns surmounted by a square chamfered abacus, which continues as a chamfered band on the wall. The capital basket is carved with barely visible angle hooks. The outside ground level is now at the same level as the start of the column trunk. The square base surmounted by a double torus is now hidden below ground level. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



145. Genêts. Sketch of the Romanesque gate in the south transept.

Sketch by Marie Lebert.



146. Genêts. The Romanesque transept crossing.

The transept crossing is bounded by four strong square piers. The two west piers are attached to the transept and the nave. They receive the four thick triangular arches surrounding the groin vault above the transept crossing. The first row of the choir opens north and south on two flat apse chapels, that open themselves on the transept arms. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



147. Genêts. The Romanesque transept crossing.

The piers support the four thick slightly triangular arches surrounding the groin vault above the transept crossing. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



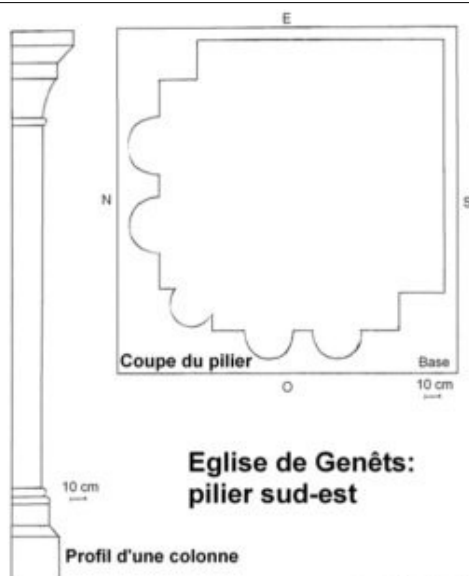
148. Genêts. The Romanesque transept crossing.

The four piers are perfectly symmetrical, with two flat non-molded sides and two sides with two attached twin columns on a backwall, that support the triangular arches. On one angle of each pillar, an attached column supports the spring of one arris of the vault. Each pillar is surmounted by a large impost molded with a chamfered band. Photo by Claude Rayon.



149. Genêts. A pier of the Romanesque transept crossing.

The four tower piers (with the south-east pier on this photo) are perfectly symmetrical. Two sides have a flat non-molded surface. On the other two sides, the arches are received by two attached twin columns on a backwall. In one corner, an attached column receives the spring of one arris of the vault. The carved basket capitals are surmounted by a thick square abacus. The square bases are surmounted by a double torus. The pier itself rests on a broader square base. Photo by Claude Rayon.



150. Genêts. Sketch of the south-east pier of the transept crossing.

The pier is surmounted by an impost molded with a chamfered band. East and south, the pier has a flat non-molded surface. North and west, the arches are received by two attached twin columns on a backwall. At the north-west angle, an attached column receives the spring of one arris of the vault. The carved capital baskets are surmounted by a thick square abacus. The pier itself rests on a broader square base. Sketch by Marie Lebert.



151. Genêts. The north-west pier of the transept crossing (detail).

The capital baskets, carved in low relief, are adorned with plant-like pattern such as chestnut leaves, oak leaves with acorns, and vine leaves. Other baskets are carved with grapes, animal designs (for example hares) or geometric designs (for example small arches and prominent bands). Photo by Alain Dermigny.



152. Genêts. The main gate and its porch.

The south gate of the nave, which is from the 13th century, has a porch that was added in the 16th century. The porch has offered to (past and present) pilgrims and parishioners two stone benches and a shelter from rain and winds. Photo by Claude Rayon.



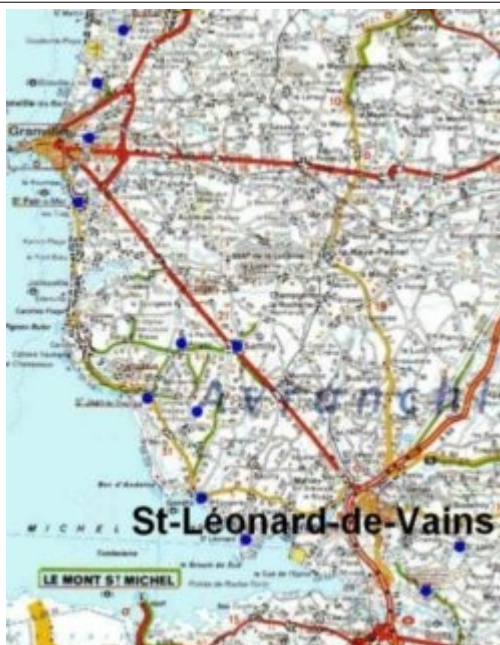
153. Genêts. The main gate and its porch.

The 16th-century porch is surmounted by a wooden frame added in the 18th century. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



154. Genêts. The porch (detail).

The wooden frame of the porch dates from the 18th century. Photo by Claude Rayon.



155. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. Its location.

The village of Saint-Léonard-de-Vains is located at the end of Grouin du Sud (a peninsula), three kilometers from the village of Vains, and seven kilometers from the town of Avranches. The priory church stands in front of the bay of Mont Saint-Michel and the rock of Tombelaine. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains was the last village on the medieval route coming from Caen. Then the pilgrims needed to cross dangerous sand strands to reach Mont Saint-Michel, their final destination. The priory church became a private property the French Revolution (and has stayed a private property ever since), and the former parish is now part of the parish of Vains.



156. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The village and its priory church.

A quiet landscape under the snow, at the end of the winter. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



157. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The village and its priory church.

A quiet landscape seen a little closer, at the end of the winter. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



158. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. Mont Saint-Michel seen from the priory church.

From there, Mont Saint-Michel seems to open itself to pilgrims and travellers at the end of their journey. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains is an old village. St. Leonard lived there in the 6th century before being elected the eighth bishop of Avranches in 578. The village was then invaded by the Normans in the 9th century. After the Norman conquest, the village was part of the Duke of Normandy's territory, and the fiefdom of the seigneurs of Vains. In 1087, shortly before his death, William the Conqueror gave the priory to the Abbey of Saint-Etienne in Caen. In 1158, Henry II confirmed this donation, which included a mansion, arable lands and vineyards, as well as salines with rights to fish and collect kelp. Photo by Claude Rayon.



159. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. Mont Saint-Michel seen from the priory church.

The spring landscape was taken from the garden of the priory church. The priory was a simple priory, i.e. a small monastery where a few monks sent from a main abbey were living under the direction of a prior. The priory church was the property of the Abbey of Saint-Etienne in Caen until the French Revolution. Photo by Claude Rayon.



160. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The former priory church.

The priory church was sold in 1793, during the French Revolution, and the buyer turned the church into a farm building. In an article published in December 1976 in "Le Pays de Granville", Jean Bindet recounted that, "after the nationalization of the church properties in November 1789 and the sale of national properties from 1791 on, the priory church and the dovecote were left abandoned, and their ruins were sold in 1793 for the sum of 200 francs in banknotes. The buyer, wanting its purchase to fructify, decided to transform the church into a farm building. The choir of the ancient church became a kitchen with a fireplace built in the apse; the nave became a barn and a stable; the tower itself was reused, with the base as a cellar, and the first floor divided into a room and an attic, and surmounted by a chimney." The priory remained a farm for a long time, as evidenced by the cow behind the fence. This old photo was digitized by Claude Rayon.



161. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The priory church in the village.

The priory church has stayed a private property until now, but is no longer a farm. In cooperation with the French Historic Monuments, the owner has turned the nave into a house. In 1985, date of this photo, the tower and the choir were still in bad shape, but have been restored since. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



162. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The priory church.

The nave has become the present owner's house, which explains the rectangular doors and windows. However the priory church has retained its original form, with a nave strengthened by buttresses and a two-row choir with a flat apse. The tower, between choir and nave, is surmounted by a saddleback roof. The choir and the tower were restored recently. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



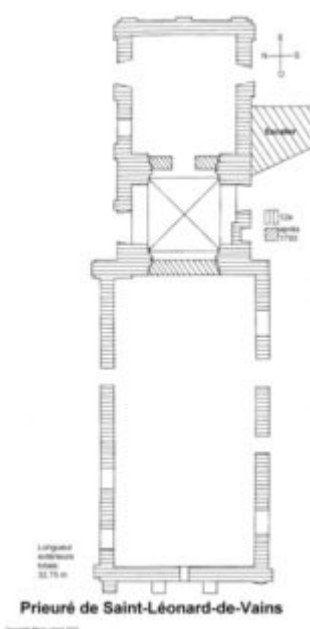
163. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The priory church.

On this photo dated 1978, we still see the stairs leading to the first floor of the tower, and the chimney above the choir, as shown in the next picture. The stairs and the chimney were removed then. Photo by Marie Lebert.



164. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The priory church.

On this recent photo from 2009, the large rectangular openings pierced in the choir and the tower have been replaced by small bays of Romanesque style. The stairs leading to the first floor of the tower were removed, like the chimney above the choir. The building is back to its former beauty. Photo by Claude Rayon.



165. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The plan of the priory church.

Oriented from west to east, like most churches, the building is formed of a nave and a two-row choir with a flat apse. The whole building has an external length of 32.75 meters and an external width of 9.65 meters (width of the frontage). The tower rises between choir and nave. Plan by Marie Lebert.



166. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The Romanesque tower.

This tower dates from the early 12th century. Situated in the extension of the choir, its square base is surmounted by two floors in slight recess. The first floor was probably blind originally, with openings pierced after the French Revolution. The second floor is opened north, east and south by two twin semi-circular arches. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



167. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The Romanesque tower.

The masonry is made of irregular blocks of schist and granite, with a few rows of regular granite blocks. The saddleback roof rests north and south on a cornice supported by modillions. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



168. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The Romanesque tower.

The second floor is adorned on three sides (north, east and south) with two twin semi-circular arches, with a double grain formed by two rows of granite quoins. The arch rests on plain abutments through a square abacus, that continues as an horizontal band along the wall. The cornice is supported by modillions carved with rough human heads or molded in quarter-round. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



169. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The Romanesque tower.

The second floor of the tower is surmounted by a saddleback roof. Two birds are resting. Photo by Claude Rayon.



170. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The north wall of the tower base.

This wall is consolidated with a central buttress surrounded by two semi-circular bays with an arch formed by a row of granite quoins. The lowered arch and the gate abutments are made of large blocks of granite. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



171. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The north wall of the tower base.

The lower part of the wall consists of an "opus spicatum" (fishbone masonry) characterizing the 11th or early 12th century. The masonry of the upper part of the wall is made of regular blocks of granite. A row of badly damaged modillions is still visible above the bays. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



172. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. A gate in the tower base.

This early Romanesque gate with has a semi-circular arch and abutments in granite. The presence of "opus spicatum" (fishbone masonry) in the masonry is also a sign that the church is early Romanesque. Photo by Claude Rayon.



173. Saint-Léonard-de-Vains. The base of the Romanesque tower.

The tower rests on four massive piers in granite. Photo by Claude Rayon.



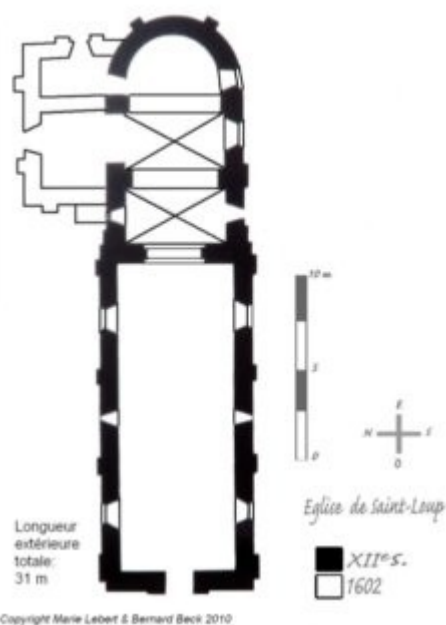
174. Saint-Loup. Its location.

The village of Saint-Loup - also called Saint-Loup-sous-Avranches - is located south-east of Avranches, only six kilometers from the town, in a hilly region close to the granite ground of Avranches, which explains that the church was built only with granite rocks, and not with schist rocks too like most small churches.



175. Saint-Loup. The Romanesque church.

The church of Saint-Loup is the only entirely Romanesque building remaining in the region. Built by the seigneurs of Saint-Loup, the church was under St. Loup's patronage. The second saint is St. Gilles. The parish belonged to the Deanery of Tirepied and the Archidiaconé of Avranches. The nave has three rows. The north and south walls are each consolidated with four buttresses. Three small semi-circular bays are still visible, two in the south wall and one in the north wall. The other bays were opened or enlarged thereafter. The church was granted the title of Historic Monument in 1921. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



176. Saint-Loup. The church plan.

Oriented from west to east, like most churches, the building is formed by a two-row nave and a three-row choir with a semi-circular apse. The whole building has an external length of 31 meters and an external width of 8.2 meters (width of the frontage). The tower rises above the first row of the choir. The north chapel adjacent to the second row of the choir was added in 1602 by the seigneurs of Saint-Loup. Plan by Marie Lebert and Bernard Beck.



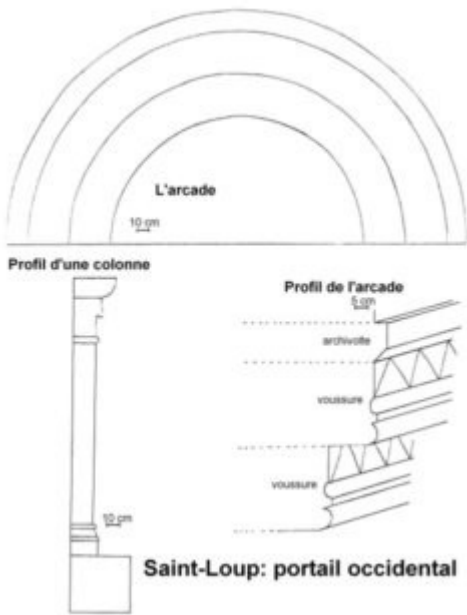
177. Saint-Loup. The Romanesque west frontage.

Consolidated with two buttresses, the front wall is surmounted by a slight glacis and a gable wall. The bay with a triangular arch above the gate probably dates from the 13th century. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



178. Saint-Loup. The Romanesque west gate.

The semi-circular arch of the gate is formed of two grains surrounded by a archivolt, which is a chamfered band. Each grain has the following moldings: a thick angle torus, a listel, a shallow cavetto, and a row carved with a hollow saw-teeth pattern. The grains rest on four attached columns. Molded in quarter-round, the capital abaci continue as a horizontal band along the wall. The baskets are carved with rough sculptures: angle hooks or angle heads whose features were erased by time and rain. The square bases are adorned with a torus above a chamfer carved with barely visible small claws. These square bases rest on a small stone wall continuing on the whole length of the frontage. The lintel is made from a big monolith block of granite, and is surmounted by an "opus reticulatum" (diamond-shaped masonry). Photo by Alain Dermigny.



179. Saint-Loup. Sketch of the Romanesque west gate.

Sketch by Marie Lebert.

**180. Saint-Loup. The south wall of the choir.**

Between the two buttresses on each side of the south gate, the masonry is supported by a cornice with three large carved modillions. The first modillion is a grotesque human being who puts his right hand to his mouth while folding his left arm. The second modillion is a human head. The third modillion is a crouched human being, with his hands on his knees. Photo by Alain Dermigny.

**181. Saint-Loup. The Romanesque tower.**

The church tower rises above the first row of the choir. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



182. Saint-Loup. The Romanesque tower.

The masonry of its walls is made of regular granite blocks, that are smaller than for other parts of the church. The granite was extracted from the granite ground of Avranches, a few kilometers from Saint-Loup. In the foreground, on the right, this buttress belongs to the north chapel adjacent to the second row of the choir. This chapel was added in 1602 by the seigneurs of Saint-Loup. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



183. Saint-Loup. The Romanesque tower.

The square tower consists of two floors surmounted by a spire. The first floor is ornated north and south with large blind arcades. The second floor is opened by a bay on each side. The level between the two floors is underlined by a chamfered band. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



184. Saint-Loup. The Romanesque tower.

The upper floor is opened by a bay on each side. This bay is surrounded by a semi-circular arch formed by two grains surrounded by a chamfered band. Each grain is molded with a thick angle torus followed by a listel and a broad shallow cavetto. On both sides of the bay, the grains rest on four small attached columns. The basket capitals are carved with geometric designs (angle hooks or half-circles) or human heads. These baskets are surmounted by a square abacus continuing as a square horizontal band along the wall. The square base of the small columns is surmounted by a double torus. Photo by Marie Lebert.



185. Saint-Loup. The Romanesque tower.

The lower floor is adorned north and south by a double blind semi-circular arch surmounted by a prominent band continuing as an horizontal band on the bare wall and then on the east and west sides. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



186. Saint-Loup. The Romanesque tower (detail).

On the lower floor, a small "opus reticulatum" (diamond-shaped blocks) is present on the corner formed by the twin arches. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



187. Saint-Loup. The Romanesque tower.

The upper floor is opened by a similar bay on each side. The semi-circular arch of the bays is formed of two grains surrounded by a chamfered band and resting on four small attached columns. The capital baskets are carved with geometric designs such as angle hooks and half-circles, while other baskets are carved with human heads. These bays have similarities with the west and south gates: we find the same moldings for the grains and similar sculptures for the capital baskets. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



188. Saint-Loup. The Romanesque tower (detail).

The cornice rests on modillions carved with human heads or molded in quarter-round. Most of the cornice was rebuilt during the rebuilding of the octagon spire on a square base, with skylights. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



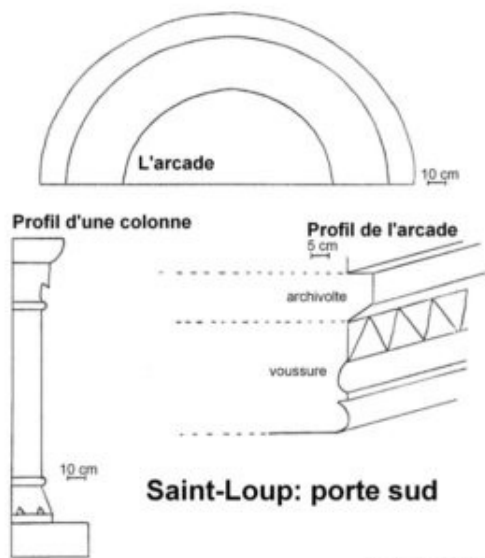
189. Saint-Loup. The Romanesque tower (detail).

These five modillions are carved with human heads. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



190. Saint-Loup. The Romanesque south gate.

This gate is opened in the first row of the choir. The semi-circular arch is formed of an grain surrounded by an archivolt made of a chamfered band. The grain is molded with a thick angle torus followed by a listel and a large shallow cavetto. The grain rests on two attached columns. The capital baskets, carved with human heads, are surmounted by abaci molded in quarter-round. Photo by Marie Lebert.



191. Saint-Loup. Sketch of the Romanesque south gate.

This gate is opened in the first row of the choir. Sketch by Marie Lebert.

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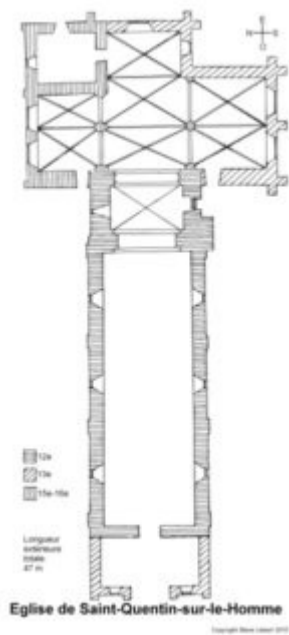
192. Saint-Quentin-sur-le-Homme. Its location.

The village of Saint-Quentin-sur-le-Homme is located six kilometers from the town of Avranches, in the hills of the Selune river. Saint-Quentin was situated on the medieval route used by pilgrims who were coming from Tinchebray, Condé-sur-Noireau, Falaise or Lisieux to reach Mont Saint-Michael. The parish of Saint-Quentin was one of the nine parishes around the parish of Avranches. These nine parishes were grouped in the Deanery of Chrétienté (Christendom), which was itself part of the Archidiaconé of Avranches.



193. Saint-Quentin-sur-le-Homme. The church.

The large church has a rectangular narthex (wide porch) on the entire length of the frontage. The tower base and the nave are Romanesque - probably from the second half of the 12th century - and have similarities with the church of Saint-Loup. Several parts date from the 13th century: the narthex, the two floors of the tower, the three-row choir, and the south chapel of the choir. The north chapel was built later on, in the 15th or 16th century. The walls of the nave still bear the mark of the large bays that were opened in the 18th century to replace the small Romanesque bays. The present bays date from 1951, with a size similar to the original bays. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



194. Saint-Quentin-sur-le-Homme. The church plan.

Oriented from west to east, like most churches, the building is formed of a three-row nave and a three-row choir with a flat apse. The whole building has an external length of 47 meters and an external width of 9.6 meters (width of the frontage). North and south, two large chapels are adjacent to the first two rows of the choir. They are so large that they look like transept arms. The tower is between choir and nave. The church front has a narthex (wide porch) on its entire length. Plan by Marie Lebert.



195. Saint-Quentin-sur-le-Homme. An inside view of the church.

The large tower, between choir and nave, rests on four thick piers that receive east and west two semi-circular arches with a double ring. The row between choir and nave is surmounted by a groin vault with an oblong plan. In the foreground, the wooden barrel vault of the nave was rebuilt in 1926 and 1927. The nave pavings were laid in 1929. The church walls were covered with lime plaster in 1953. Photo by Marie Lebert.



196. Saint-Quentin-sur-le-Homme. The tower and the Romanesque wayside cross.

The large tower has a Romanesque base, two floors from the 13th century, and a saddleback roof. In the foreground rises a Romanesque wayside cross. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



197. Saint-Quentin-sur-le-Homme. The Romanesque wayside cross.

The Romanesque wayside cross is situated near the church. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



198. Saint-Quentin-sur-le-Homme. The narthex.

On the entire length of the church frontage, a rectangular narthex (wide porch) was built the 13th century, and surmounted with an openwork balustrade later on. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



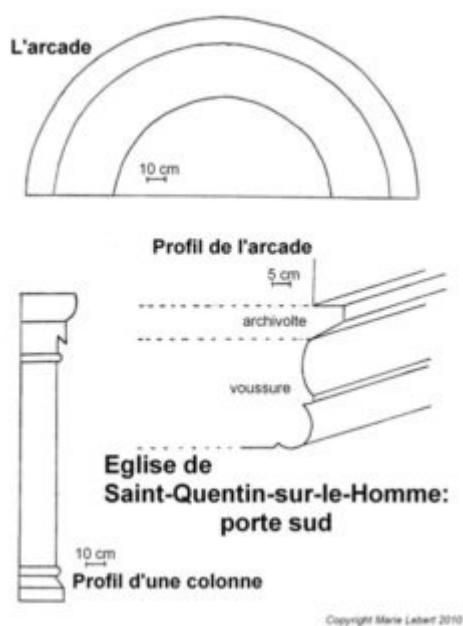
199. Saint-Quentin-sur-le-Homme. The Romanesque west gate.

This gate is surrounded by a semi-circular two-groin arch and an archivolt. The grains rest on four attached columns, with square bases adorned with a torus surmounted by a chamfer. The capitals baskets are carved with rough sculptures in high relief: balls, heads with a prominent chin, and a human being on all fours. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



200. Saint-Quentin-sur-le-Homme. The Romanesque gate of the tower base.

This sealed gate is similar to the south gate of the church of Saint-Loup. Its semi-circular arch is formed by a grain surrounded by an archivolt with a chamfered band. The grain is molded with a thick angle torus followed by a listel and a shallow cavetto. The grain rests on two thick columns through a band molded in quarter-round forming the abacus of the capitals, and continuing on the bare wall. The capital baskets are carved with a tree on the right, and two human heads on the left. The two bases are square. The left base is topped with a chamfer adorned with tiny triangular claws and a torus, while the right base is surmounted by a double torus. The tympanum is formed by a large monolith block of granite resting on inside abutments through a band molded in quarter-round. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



201. Saint-Quentin-sur-le-Homme. Sketch of the south gate of the tower base.

Sketch by Marie Lebert.



202. Sartilly. Its location.

The town of Sartilly is located on the direct road between Granville and Avranches, fifteen kilometers south of Granville and eleven kilometers north of Avranches. Sartilly was on the medieval route going from Saint-Lô to Mont Saint-Michel, the final destination for many pilgrims. The parish of Sartilly belonged to the Deanery of Genêts and the Archidiaconé of Avranches. The church of Sartilly is under St. Pair's patronage.



203. Sartilly. The Romanesque gate.

This gate was the west gate of the Romanesque church, and is now the south gate of the church that replaced it. The Romanesque church, which was ready to collapse, was demolished in 1858 to be replaced by a much larger building of Gothic inspiration. Photo by Marie Lebert.



204. Sartilly. The Romanesque gate.

The capital baskets are carved with various designs like oak leaves, acanthus leaves, scrolls framing an acanthus leaf at the corner, or corner curls. The sculptures, carved in high relief in granite, are much more elegant than in any other small church in the region. The square base of the columns is surmounted by a double torus. Photo by Marie Lebert.



205. Sartilly. The old Romanesque church, demolished in 1858.

This drawing was published in 1925 in the "Revue de l'Avranchin". This church was described in an official document from the City Council (Registre des Délibérations du Conseil Municipal de 1837-1864): "The church we should replace is an old building (...) composed of: (1) a dark nave which is 19 meters and 60 centimeters long and 7 meters wide, with the lower part of its walls soaked with moisture and cracked in several places, and not standing straight anymore, particularly towards the end of the church; (2) a tower between the nave and the choir (...); (3) a choir which is 9 meters long and 6 meters wide (...)." Photo by Alain Dermigny.



206. Sartilly. The Romanesque gate.

This gate, probably from the second half of the 12th century, is the most beautiful Romanesque gate in the region. It was built in granite, which is the local stone, Sartilly being located at the heart of the granite ground of Vire. The moldings of the arch and archivolt show a meticulous work, as well as the sculptures of the capital baskets, with oak leaves, acanthus leaves and scrolls. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



207. Sartilly. The Romanesque gate.

Sketch of the arch, the archivolt and a column. This gate, which was the west gate of the Romanesque church, is now the south gate of the church that replaced it. Sketch by Marie Lebert.



208. Sartilly. The Romanesque gate.

The arch of the gate is formed of three grains: a grain with a lower centering, and two semi-circular grains surmounted by an archivolt. The first grain is molded with a thick angle torus followed by a listel and a large cavetto adorned with large and slightly rounded bezants. The second grain is molded with a thick angle torus. The third grain is molded with two tori surrounding a listel. The archivolt is a prominent cordon with a saw-teeth pattern in high relief carved with a hollow row of triangular sticks. The archivolt rests on both sides on two carved heads with well designed features. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



209. Sartilly. The Romanesque gate (detail).

On each side of the gate, the three grains of the archivolt rest on three attached columns through an impost molded with a cavetto. The square part of the impost is adorned with a small hollow molding. The impost continues above the external pier supporting the archivolt. This photo shows the three columns on the left. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



210. Sartilly. The Romanesque gate (detail).

The archivolt is formed by a band adorned with saw-teeth in high relief carved with a row of triangular sticks. On either side of the arch, it rests on a head carved in the granite. This photo shows the carved head on the left side. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



211. Sartilly. The Romanesque gate (detail).

The same carved head, in profile, on the left side of the archivolt. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



212. Sartilly. The Romanesque gate (detail).

The carved head on the right side of the archivolt. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



213. Sartilly. The Romanesque gate (detail).

The same carved head, seen closer, on the right side of the archivolt. Photo by Alain Dermigny.



214. End of this album.

This corbel is adorned with an angel holding a shield, in the church of Saint-Pair-sur-Mer. Photo by Claude Rayon.

Special thanks to Alain Dermigny and Claude Rayon for their photos. Many thanks to Bernard Beck, Danièle Cercel, Georges Cercel, Philippe Dartiguenave, Nicolas Pewny, Martine Valenti, Marie-Noëlle Vivier and Russon Wooldridge for their kind help over the years.

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A French version is also available on the Internet Archive, under the title: *L'art roman dans la baie du Mont Saint-Michel*.